

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 L-03 SCA-01 SCS-03 H-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 DODE-00

SCCT-01 SY-05 PA-01 USIA-06 /065 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 818

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: MARTIN-PEREZ HUMAN RIGHTS CHANNEL

REF: (A) MANAGUA 3490, (B) MANAGUA 3504, (C) MANAGUA 3128

SUMMARY: EMBASSY CONTACT FOR USG-GON COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES DESCRIBED IN REFTELS ESTABLISHED BY POLOFF IN MEETING WITH PEREZ ON AUGUST 7, 1976. SUBJECTS DISCUSSED INCLUDED EXCLUSION OF U.S. CITIZEN-CAPUCHIN PRIEST BERTRAND AND NUMEROUS REPORTS OF GN ABUSES IN RIO BLANCO AREA. INITIAL REACTION APPEARS POSITIVE. END SUMMARY

1. POLOFF ACCOMPANIED BY DEFATT MET WITH GEN. PEREZ AUGUST 7 TO ESTABLISH NEW EMBASSY CONTACT POINT. GEN. PEREZ STATED IMPORTANCE GON ATTACHES TO DISPELLING PROBLEM CREATED BY MALICIOUS PROPAGANDA PERPETUATED BY NICARAGUAN RUMOR MILL AND REFERRED TO INTENT OF PRES. SOMOZA TO ELIMINATE MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS. HE REFERRED TO MEETING SCHEDULED LATER DURING THE DAY BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND NICARAGUAN PRIESTS (WHICH WAS LIMITED TO MILITARY CHAPLAINS).

2. POLOFF RAISED CASE OF EXCLUSION OF U.S. CITIZEN-CAPUCHIN PRIEST EVARISTO BERTRAND AS CASE WHICH LIKELY TO TROUBLE U.S.- NICARAGUAN RELATIONS AS RESULT OF LACK

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OF INFORMATION SUPPORTING GON ALLEGATION OF HIS SUBVERSIVE

ACTIVITIES. PEREZ STATED GON HAD RECEIVED MANY REPORTS OF BERTRAND'S SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AND WOULD FURNISH FURTHER INFORMATION. POLOFF REFERRED TO DISQUIET AMONG CAPUCHINS OVER THIS CASE WHICH THEY FELT JEOPARDIZED THEIR MISSION AND MENTIONED OPEN LETTER QUESTIONING NATURE OF CHARGES AGAINST BERTRAND. GEN. PEREZ, AFTER CHECKING, STATED LETTER HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED. POLOFF AGREED TO SUPPLY COPY.

3. POLOFF DESCRIBED HIS IMPRESSION CAMPESINOS WERE BEING CAUGHT IN FIGURATIVE CROSS-FIRE BETWEEN FRENTE AND GUARDIA. PEREZ STATED PAST CONDITIONS, AS RESULT OF EARTHQUAKE WHEN GON AUTHORITY IN COUNTRYSIDE WAS WEAKENED, HAD LED TO SITUATION WHERE THIS WAS TRUE, BUT GON NOW HAD NEARLY COMPLETED EFFORT TO REESTABLISH AUTHORITY SO CAMPESINOS WOULD KNOW THEY DID NOT HAVE TO SUBMIT TO PRESSURES OF FRENTE GROUPS.

4. POLOFF REFERRED TO RECURRENT REPORTS OF ABUSES AGAINST CAMPESINOS IN RIO BLANCO AREA. PEREZ DESCRIBED THESE REPORTS, WHICH HE TOO HAD RECEIVED, AS PART OF THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. POLOFF STATED SOME REPORTS REACHING EMB WERE FROM SOURCES WE CONSIDERED NONPOLITICAL AND OBJECTIVE.

5. MEETING, WHICH LASTED 45 MINUTES, ENDED WITH PEREZ CONFIRMING COMMITMENT TO FURNISH DATA ON BERTRAND CASE AND POLOFF CONFIRMING AGREEMENT TO FURNISH CAPUCHIN LETTER.

6. PEREZ CALLED DEFATT SAME EVENING TO STATE HE HAD DISCUSSED OUR CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT, AND PRESIDENT PLANNED TO MEET WITH CAPUCHINS NEXT WEEK. ADDITIONALLY, HE STATED NUNCIO AND BISHOPS WERE PLANNING TO ISSUE LETTER IN NEXT FEW DAYS ON CATHOLIC CHURCH POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

7. COMMENT: PEREZ' RESPONSE TO DEFATT (HE PROBABLY WAS UNABLE TO CONTACT POLOFF AFTER OFFICE HOURS) INDICATES THIS CHANNEL IS NOW ESTABLISHED. WHETHER SPECIFIC DATA REQUESTED WILL BE FORTHCOMING REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN ANY CASE, PEREZ IS LIKELY TO PROVE AN EFFECTIVE CONTACT POINT FOR THIS CHANNEL INASMUCH AS HE CAN COMMIT GON TO FURNISH INFO ON SPECIFIC CASES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND HAS DIRECT ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT REGARDING GENERAL AREAS OF CONCERN.
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